“Consecrated life is not about survival – it’s about new life.”

- Pope Francis
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# PASSIONIST INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

**N. 46 - New Series - 1-2019**

Supplement to L’Eco of Saint Gabriel

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**Printing**

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64023 Mosciano Sant’Angelo (TE)
Tel. 39.345.4009948
REPORT OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL,
FR. JOACHIM REGO,
TO THE 47TH GENERAL CHAPTER

[Below are excerpts from the Superior General’s Re- port, presented on Monday, 8 October 2018, in the Chap- ter Hall, at the Generalate of Sts. John and Paul Rome. To read the complete text please see the Congregation’s Website, www.passiochristi.org, the “Documents” category, General Chapter, 2018.]

in Configurations in order to encourage collaboration in a new way for giving greater strength for our life and mission. The fear and some resistance effected by the new change in many respects kept us focused inward on our internal structures, rather than looking outward and finding effective ways to collaborate and join forces in a wider context for revitalising and implementing the Congregation’s specific mission. Having said that, I also acknowledge the many bold collaborative initiatives which have emerged and continue to do so.

It is time now for us to focus on the charismatic testimony of our mission – the reason for our existence as a Congregation. As a support to this direction, we are living in a time of the Church’s history, especially under Pope Francis’ leadership, when a strong emphasis on evangelization and mission is encouraged: proclaiming the joy of the Gospel to the poor and going out on mission to the peripheries and margins. We must remember that as a Congregation we exist in the Church, not just for our own edification, or our glorification, or for our profit, but for a very specific and meaningful purpose... Our mission is integrally connected with our life in community. Our community life and our mission cannot be separated; they are two sides of the one coin. Our life is our mission (by witness), and our mission is our life (by action). Together, they both shape us and give us our identity and authenticity as Passionists. Who we are and what we do are interconnected and interrelated. “Our involvement in the apostolate flows directly from our life in community.” (Const. 67)

Thus, I believe, when we speak about “Renewing our Mission”, it is primarily about “renewing ourselves”. The ‘mission’ is given; it is clear. However, because our mission flows from ‘who we are’, we must be constantly open to self-renewal – which is our response and openness to what God is doing in us for the coming of God’s kingdom. It is the ongoing call to conversion and repentance in the mission of the kingdom of God. The renewal of the mission is a natural consequence of the renewal of the missionaries...

Introduction

I want to begin this report with an expression of gratitude to all my brothers and sisters in the Congregation for your confidence and trust, not only in calling me to serve the Congregation as Superior General six years ago, but in truly supporting me in my ministry over these years. I can sincerely say that I have never felt abandoned to the task and left to do my work without your interest and concern for my welfare. I have genuinely felt your fraternal support in the best interest of our Congregation and, at the outset, I want to say THANK YOU!...

For the past 18 years the Congregation has been very much engaged with the process of Congregational restructuring. Whilst this process had as its aim the revitalisation of our mission, much of our energy and preoccupation has in fact been expended with struggling to understand and implement the new vision and way-of-being demanded from the process - which was to institutionalise structures of solidarity

"Who we are and what we do are interconnected and interrelated."
Community Life

This is an area of our life that continues to pose many challenges. Partly the difficulty lies in our understanding (or mis-understanding) of the nature and purpose of the community dimension of religious life from which flows our expectations of community life. Our Constitutions #25 states that: “Our Passionist vocation is a call to live the fullness of Christian love in an evangelical community.” It is clear that our community life is our first apostolate and must be inspired by, give witness to and reflect the values of the Gospel. However, in many instances, this is far from the reality. In fact, often our community life is about bodies in a dwelling and we fail to give sufficient attention to the purpose and meaning of our living together...

There is no doubt today that we come from the experience of a world where we are influenced by and tempted towards individualism and self-seeking tendencies. This is contrary to our chosen vocation and it places great challenges on our profession to live by the evangelical counsels: poverty, chastity and obedience – the essence of which is about considering others, self-giving, sacrifice, simplicity of lifestyle, sharing, availability for service, hospitality and the call to inclusive love. Naturally, these values do not cater for our comfort and ease, but they do draw and allow us to live by our consecration and give witness to the Cross and Passion of Jesus. In this way the vows are not just juridical requirements which is measured by whether we keep them or break them. Rather, the vows are evangelical counsels (Gospel imperatives) which lays before us a pathway that makes us free to love...

I would like to emphasise here two points from our Constitutions which I believe needs greater reflection and action:

a) “The Local Community is the living cell on which depends the vitality of the entire Congregation.” (Const. 119)

This is an awesome responsibility which every local community needs to consider and assume. The responsibility pertains to each and every member of the community: “Each individual member has the right and duty to take part in all the steps involved in making decisions; his role should never be one of merely passive acquiescence.”

b) The critical role and figure of the (Local) Superior who is to be: encouraging, inviting the involvement and contribution of the members, listening, servant, guide, respectful of every member, kind and considerate, gentle, firm, consistent, pastor, animator (cf. Const. 119, 120). This role needs serious attention and formation – especially in the newer and younger parts of the Congregation. It is important that Superiors not view their role as managers of a company but work to create a sense of brotherhood and fraternity in community united in a common life and mission. As Pope Francis said: “The fraternal community has enormous power to call people together. The illnesses of the community, on the other hand, have power that destroys.”

I propose that this Chapter consider the issues of Community Life and the Service of Authority as priorities to address.

Mission and Ministry

No matter what type of apostolate we are engaged with (not of our own choosing, but within the plan of the province/community), we must always keep before our focus the specific aspect of Christ’s life and person which is related to his Passion, Death and Resurrection. It goes without saying that, for this to happen, we must, first, cultivate a living relationship with Christ Crucified... “We Passionists make the Paschal Mystery the centre of our lives... (which) entails a loving commitment to follow Jesus Crucified, and a generous resolve to proclaim His Passion and death with faith and love.” (Const. 65)
Secondly, we must be ever attentive to both people and our earth/environment today “crucified as they are by injustice, by the lack of a deep respect for human life, and by a hungry yearning for peace, truth, and the fullness of human existence.” (Const. 65)...

Unfortunately, there exist some houses in the Congregation where the religious are so busy and engaged with the apostolate, that there is difficulty finding a supportive religious and fraternal life, thus creating an environment of loneliness, distance, spiritual dryness and meaninglessness. In some of these situations, even common prayer is abandoned due to choices made in favour of service to the people…” Doing God’s work?” Naturally, we must not neglect to serve and attend to the demands of our people. However, we must also not neglect our own spiritual and physical nourishment and health in order that we carry out our mission in accordance with the desire of God and serve the people from a depth of what we have received from God...

"It is important that Superiors not view their role as managers of a company but work to create a sense of brotherhood and fraternity in community united in a common life and mission."

Formation

Formation for our life (initial and ongoing) remains, perhaps, the most critical area deserving, and receiving, much attention… Some concerns in the area of formation needing attention are: Some concerns, however, in the area of formation needing attention are that:

• Priority to be given for the training and formation of formators. While formators can surely benefit from doing academic courses in spirituality, theology, psychology etc., it is of vital importance that the formator firstly undertake an intensive program in greater knowledge and understanding of himself, so that he can better understand and assist those he will be accompanying in the formation process. Training in Spiritual Direction and Clinical Pastoral Education are recommended;

• Entities and Configurations have in place a succession plan for formators. Suitable religious need to be identified and trained;

• Formation emphasise the consecrated life, the charismatic and missionary life of the Congregation, and not just rely on the requirements for the ordained ministerial priesthood;

• Formation does not happen in a vacuum (going through the course requirements), devoid of any connection with the reality of life today – in the world, in the Church, and in the Congregation/communities. Encourage students/religious with opportunities to test their vocation and to experience mission and community life in other challenging contexts and cultures;

• We aim to form evangelising missionaries according to discerned needs in the Congregation, the Church and the world of today – and not just ‘workers’ or priests to fill positions;

• Continuous or ongoing formation at all levels be structured and resourced, especially for personal and spiritual renewal and not just academic studies. This must also include identifying and qualifying selected religious who would work within the internal structures/ministries of the Congregation.

Configurations

The six Configurations which resulted from the process of Congregational Restructuring and confirmed at the last General Chapter continues to be a great preoccupation. There are those who are excited about the prospects and possibilities of this new way of being and collaborating within structures of solidarity, while there are others who have remained resistant and uncooperative. I suspect that the reasons are because of not having a proper understanding of this vision, and also the closedness resulting from the inevitable fear of uncertainty which comes from any newness and change...
New times require new responses: “new wine in new wineskins” (Mk. 2:18-22). The Congregation cannot live its life and mission ‘frozen’ in the 18th century! If it does, then it is doomed to staleness and irrelevancy. The gift of the charism remains the life-giving force of the Spirit – but for today, for new times. It is true that it is much easier to hark back to the past and what we are familiar with (“the fleshpots of Egypt”), even if it kept us as slaves (imprisoned, controlled and unfree), rather than to journey through the hardships of the wilderness with the freedom to create a life-giving path for a meaningful present and future (“the Promised Land”). The key, however, for us as a Congregation, is that the journey must be traversed together with trust in God who leads and feeds us in our struggle and discernment...

All the Configurations (in its two models, either as an aggregation of several autonomous juridical entities, or as a single juridical entity) within its solidarity structures and commissions have been active in dialogue and collaboration – even if meeting some resistances – and there have been many good, bold and meaningful initiatives undertaken. I encourage that this continue and that we move forward with courage and trust to focus on the witness of our fraternal community life and our specific mission of evangelisation through the Word of the Cross as priorities...

The Laity who share our Charism

The charisma is caught, not taught! There are many lay people, who through their engagement in various way with Passionists (friendship, employment, participation, belonging, partnership in ministries, identification with the spiritual gift) feel a connection to and desire a deeper identification with the Congregation and its spirituality. We can accept this as the movement of the Spirit in the Church and also as the fruit of living our First Vow: “to recall to mind with greater love the Passion of our Lord and to promote its memory by word and deed...”

It is true that the last General Chapter asked that one member of the General Council have responsibility for this area. However, in order to better understand the situation, the General Council decided that each General Consultor will be attentive to the development of the wider Passionist Family in his respective area by meeting especially with those lay people who share our charisma in a deeper way and listening to their needs and aspirations.

Perhaps now, after many years of lived and learned experience, there could be the possibility of forming a Commission, consisting of religious and lay people, which would prepare guidelines concerning this matter for the Congregation?

The Crisis of Abuse

At this very time the Church is living through a great crisis as a result of historical institutional abuse of minors and other vulnerable persons by clergy, religious men/women, and lay church workers. This crisis has humiliated the Church and led to loss of its credibility and diminishment of its moral authority, both within the Church and in the wider society. Regrettfully, this scourge has involved Church personnel who are called to be models of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and has included those of the highest authority who have committed abuse and who have covered-up knowledge of criminal activity to protect the reputation of the Church, thereby neglecting to believe and show pastoral care and concern for the victims.

Our Congregation has not been exempt from having to face this problem directly. This has brought about much stress, disappointment and even feelings of anger towards those who have committed these reprehensible acts.

As a religious Congregation, we strongly denounce this behaviour by our members. We commit to following the protocols required by the Church and the law of the land. We will cooperate with the processes and accept the consequent penalties applied to the offenders. While admitting our guilt where it is due, the...
Congregation expresses sincere and unreserved apology to the victims of abuse by our members, offering them pastoral care and the pledge to work to bring about justice and healing for the survivors...

While this crisis has depressed us and brought about much disillusionment, we must not lose hope. Our Congregation's spirituality is founded on the life-giving hope which comes from the Passion and Cross of Jesus. So, in the strength of our faith we can accept this time of crisis as an opportunity toward repentance and conversion – personally and communally. It is certainly a call to deep purification so that with greater trust and dependence on God who called us to this life, we can live and witness our vocation in a more truthful and genuine manner. A priority in the Congregation must be the renewal of ourselves as Passionist religious in the situation of the world today.

Conclusion

In concluding this report, I want to return once again to the beginning in which I propose the thesis that if we are to “renew our mission”, then we must “renew ourselves”. These two are integrally connected and one cannot happen without the other. Of course, it goes without saying that “renewal” is an ongoing call of the Gospel for us to choose life; we are to examine and listen to all that is happening in our lives, hear the call and promptings of the Spirit, and respond by abandoning in trust to God: “let what you have said be done to me” (Lk. 1:38)...

In the situation of deep crisis being faced by the Church and the religious life in these times, we cannot remain deaf to the call of the Spirit or ignore reading the ‘signs of the times’. We must remain alert and more than ever adopt a contemplative stance. In this present situation simply suggesting and making external changes are not sufficient. They are temporary and will not be long-lasting. Something deeper and more permanent must be sought, i.e. our willingness (personally and communally) to be split apart and reknit back together by God – renewal.

Hand-in-hand with adopting a contemplative stance, we need to also cultivate a prophetic and charismatic stance by giving greater attention to reflecting on and witnessing through the evangelical counsels which is at the heart of our consecrated life and intimately connected to our mission.

Renewal of our mission will not be possible if the missionary does not let go and let God (abandonment, surrender). When Jesus missioned the 72 disciples, he challenged them: “Carry no bag, no sack, no sandals” (Lk.10:4). It sounds very tough. But what we might perceive as an exaggerated demand, is in the first place an encouragement to place our trust in God. This touches the heart of every mission. Remember, the mission is God’s, not ours! It is God who sends us. So, a mission without trust in the sender is nothing but a joke. This is closely connected to our commitment to evangelical poverty, the heart of which is our letting go of self and entrusting ourselves to God. Only a mission in ‘poverty’ is wholly credible...

My hope is that this General Chapter will call us to a renewal of our life, the process through which we will encounter again and deepen our relationship with Jesus Crucified - the source for renewing our mission.
Introduction

Paul of the Cross could never have imagined that his small group of companions would one day be at home in the continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin and North-America, even my own island continent Australia.

You are all here because you are trusted by your Province, configuration, and your communities, trusted to represent them in the challenges of the present moment, to gently carry and honour what is precious from our past, and to be open to the future that beckons us, as it always does, to have faith, hope and love, courage and trust...

Every Chapter has this unique opportunity and responsibility to choose life for ourselves and those we serve, to set our course as a congregation for the next six years...

a) The Gospel of Matthew as a source of wisdom

I was fascinated that the Chapter preparatory committee chose the uniquely Matthean parable of the Treasure Hidden in the Field as an orientation for the work of the Chapter. The more I pondered on this text the more it seemed appropriate to draw on the riches of this Gospel as a means of beginning our labours together...

Like ourselves Matthew’s community found itself in a time of transition - with all the debates, fears and expectations and excitement that accompany such times. It was a time where they sought to be faithful to their Christian identity and mission embedded in Judaism with its practices and traditions. On the other hand, they knew that the message they had been gifted with could not be constrained by the Jewish tradition that had shaped them. A larger world beckoned, and the Risen Lord called them to enter into this new world as disciples of the Kingdom...

Matthew’s genius lay in bringing together these different and sometimes competing voices in such a way that no one voice was lost so that new and vibrant harmonies were created.

Like Jesus’ own genealogy Matthew’s community, consistent with the Church in any age, was made up of saints and sinners, weeds and wheat (Matt 13:24-30) capable of courage and deceit, faith and failure, whose love can run cold (Matt 24:12) but who can rejoice because they have been invited to share in the unfolding mystery of the Kingdom (Matt 13:11). They have found the pearl of great price (Matt 13:46) but will they use the talents they have been given (Matt 25:2425), or will they be seduced by arguing about who is the greatest (Matt 18:4), will they build three tents on Tabor (Matt 17:4) or accept the invitation to follow Jesus to Calvary and beyond?

It is not difficult to draw the parallels between our situation and that of Matthew’s community. As we come to this Chapter, we acknowledge that we come with interests and points of view that sometimes will converge, and sometimes compete. Are we prepared to listen to the invitations of the Spirit that come to us from our brothers in the midst of our human frailty and diverse points of view? Are we prepared to let all the voices among us be heard, to freely acknowledge our own agendas and interests, and yet be open to those of our brothers and sisters in our wider Passionist family? The success of the Chapter relies on our individual and collective capacity to listen, to learn, and to grow together.
Matthew’s parables as a source of challenge and orientation for the work of the Chapter

**Challenge One:**

**NEW WINE NEEDS NEW WINESKINS**

(Mt 9:16-17)

This particular parable of Jesus painfully highlights the difficulty and danger of trying to hold the old and new together without due consideration... While this parable is often interpreted as being an indicator that Matthew is pleading with his community to try and hold together both old and new forms of Christian life this particular parable issues us a challenge that is clear. New cloth on old damaged garments is a formula for disaster, and new wine in old wineskins will fare no better.

How can we apply such a parable in the present moment of our history? To my mind it is a powerful reminder that sometimes, as much as we value our traditions, you must let new initiatives and ventures be tried without stifling them by forcing them to do what we have always done, in ways that we have always done them, thereby unwittingly compromising them. We know that the first five years of ordination are a time of particular risk and we grieve when we lose young men we have mentored, educated and welcomed into our communities. But have we treated them like new patches to repair the old garments of established communities, structures and provinces? Have we just expected them to fill the gaps, to mend our old garments and ministries without letting them use their gifts in the ways that only they can do? Have we allowed them to be new wine giving them the possibility and encouragement to be different, to try new ways, or old ministries in new ways? There is a clear invitation to let the new wine be what it is without forcing it to become what it is not and can never be.

**Challenge Two:**

**LIVING WITH MIXED RESULTS**

– *The parable of the sower*

This parable is so familiar to us that we run the danger of not really listening to it with fresh ears and open hearts. It is a parable of extraordinary and luminous hope in the rich harvest that must come when we allow the word of the kingdom to be planted in our hearts bringing forth a hundredfold, sixtyfold or thirtyfold. At the same time, it is a parable that is fully aware of all that endangers the growth of the kingdom in our midst when it is sown on the path, on rocky ground, or among thorns. We know all too well about the ways in which the growth of the seed can be hampered and frustrated in our lives as individuals and in our communities. The first danger is not understanding. The Greek verb συνίημι describes having an intelligent grasp of something that challenges our thinking or practice. Are we open to being challenged in this way by our modern world, the challenges of this moment, of our various cultures and context - entering deeply into its joys and sorrows, its concerns and challenges, or will we retreat into what we know and are familiar with, not seeing the opportunity to go deeper? There have been repeated calls for a new Evangelisation but that does not simply mean repeating what has been said before without listening deeply to the present moment and understanding its opportunities and its dangers...

**Challenge Three:**

**BEING HONEST ABOUT WHO WE ARE**

– *The parable of the weeds and the wheat*

This parable is unique to the Gospel of Matthew and it reveals how much this community of Christians in the mid-eighties had learned about the persistence of hope and about dealing with imperfection and struggle. The Matthean community listened again to this powerful parable of Jesus informed by their experience of the co-existence of good and evil, and the challenge that poses for the individual and...
the community. In this subtle parable weeds and wheat must co-exist and grow side by side until the harvest. How true is this of each one of us, our communities, provinces and configurations? When we look into our hearts and our Christian lives with honesty, we know that for all our dreams of giving ourselves totally as disciples and apostolic communities the realities of human frailty must be acknowledged and confronted…

Whatever plans we make in this General Chapter, whatever directions we set, this parable reminds us we cannot eliminate human frailty in ourselves and others. This should not discourage us so much as invite us to recognize our limitations so as to live with them creatively, knowing that it has always been this way and always will.

There is also a subtle reminder about how easily confused weeds and wheat can be since they look similar and can be intertwined. When applied to a moment such as a General Chapter it provides a word of caution. What sounds like wise advice in the process of discernment may be fear to try something new, what looks like prudence may really be simply be resistance when we are not willing to change our opinion or risk something new. What looks like a weed that bothers us may be wheat that God is inviting us to nurture and tend carefully. Sometimes our attitudes and prejudices can falsely identify weeds into wheat and God’s wheat that is struggling to grow into weeds because we did not see, judge and act as we are called to. Sometimes we have left our ships in the safety of the harbor when they were called to put out into the deep.

As we look back over nearly three hundred years we know that weeds and wheat are both part of our Passionist history – there have been stories of extraordinary faith, devotion and holiness, and there have been stories of sinful failure, selfishness and abuse where our limitations are painfully obvious. There have been opportunities bravely taken, and other that have sadly that passed us by. As we begin this Chapter this parable provides a profound challenge to journey in hope in the midst of all that we are. To deeply listen and discern the call of the Spirit in these precious days together.

**Challenge Four:**

**BEING PREPARED TO START BY PLANTING SEEDS**

_– Parable of the mustard seed_

It is no accident that Matthew follows the parable of the weeds and the wheat with the parable of the mustard seed. Knowing that his community of disciples were likely to be discouraged by the exercise of looking at themselves in the mirror they are called to hope, as we are, As every General chapter must. The seeds we plant might be small but they must be planted nonetheless. We have no guarantee that what we plant will grow as we desire.

**Challenge Five:**

**LIVING IN HOPE**

_– The parable of the leaven_

This parable is as short as it is powerful. It too is an invitation to hope, courage and the work of Evangelisation. It is the nature of leaven that it must be worked into the dough and it must be given time to do its work, in hidden ways, having an impact in ways we do not always understand and expect.

(Const. 6) “Then, as we relive the memory of the Passion of Christ today, our communities become a leaven of salvation in the Church and in the world.”

**Challenge Six:**

**RECOGNISING TREASURES WHEN YOU SEE THEM**

_– The parable of the weeds and the wheat_

The Chapter Preparatory commission has already attended to these parables and they are reminders of the call to be attentive and discerning in order to discover what is precious and having the courage and faith to give all that we have as disciples.
The Parable of the weeds and the wheat invite us to reflect on ourselves as both saints and sinners and acknowledge that reality, but Matthew’s Gospel has more to offer us and that is that discernment and decision making belongs to the present moment too. It is true that the angels will separate the good from the righteous, but the fishermen have already done their part and so must we. What to hold on to and what to let go of? These are the challenges that lie before us in this and every General Chapter.

**Challenge Seven:**

THE ABILITY TO DISCERN WHAT WE NEED TO LET GO OF

– *The Parable of the Dragnet*

As much as the Matthean community wanted to honor their rich Jewish tradition and practices they knew that could not stay as they had been. A new mission and a bigger world beckoned them to put out into the deep in trust and engage in the work of bringing the message of Jesus to new cultures in new ways. Gentile Christians could not be expected to take on all that Judaism demanded, and they were surprised by the gifts and treasures that these new members brought to the community.

Our rich Passionist tradition has treasures to offer us in the present moment, but there are treasures that the present moment offers that are yet to be embedded and woven into our story as we listen to each other’s stories, struggles, cultures and experience. If the passing of the years has taught us anything it is that there is not one way of being faithful to our Passionist tradition, but many.

**Challenge Eight:**

HOLDING OLD AND NEW TOGETHER

– *Parable of the Christian Scribe*

Within our own Passionist tradition both these elements are to be found as complementary elements of our charism that both challenges and comforts at the same time…

The vulnerable position of the prophet requires patience, courage, persistence, gentleness and profound trust. The only power is God’s word, the prophet has no guarantee that the word they proclaim will be heard, that they will be safe, that the people will respond, that the world will change, or that disaster’s they predict will be avoided.

At the heart of our charism is a message of vulnerable love, a love prepared to suffer for the sake of others, a love that gives life and exercises power through loving service.

Conformed to the Crucified one how can we not share in the joys and sorrows of our contemporaries, or not hear their cries and share in their longing for justice, peace and dignity?... Put in the words of our Constitutions 9: “If the message of the Cross has not first penetrated our own lives, we ought not presume to proclaim it to others”...

May the Crucified one shine in our hearts providing us the light we need, so that we can be the light the world needs.

c) A charism-based plan for the future

The very themes of the Chapter called to being prophetic and concerned with hope point to a tension within the prophetic experience within the Judeo-Christian tradition. There were two enduring prophetic modes.

*The first mode* was that of the voice that challenges and calls us to account, a voice of lament and judgment that is particularly concerned to unveil hypocrisy, self-seeking and complacency. It is the voice that holds a mirror up to us and discomforts us confronting us with our sinfulness, reminding us of our unfaithfulness, forgetfulness and lack of love for God and others.

*The second mode*, just as important, is the voice of comfort that comes when everything has fallen to pieces, when disasters and destruction have broken our spirits and robbed us of hope, when all seems lost, and God seems distant and uncaring. In those moments of exile and discouragement the prophet calls out – no, you are not lost, you are not alone, you are not forgotten.

Conformed to the Crucified one how can we not share in the joys and sorrows of our contemporaries, or not hear their cries and share in their longing for justice, peace and dignity?... Put in the words of our Constitutions 9: “If the message of the Cross has not first penetrated our own lives, we ought not presume to proclaim it to others”...

May the Crucified one shine in our hearts providing us the light we need, so that we can be the light the world needs.
Lifelong learning (LL) is today a very familiar concept, in the sense that it is spoken of a great deal. Of course, much more is said of it than is done to put it into practice and live it in fact. And since this imbalance is linked, at least in part, to the imprecision with which the concept is defined, we will try to clarify the idea. Also, because the risk in the end is not only conceptual, but it affects our life -- that is, if our life is not lifelong learning it is lifelong frustration. There is no middle ground!

1.1 - "Have in you the same sentiments as Christ Jesus" (Phil 2,5)

What the *Vita Consecrata* (Synod 1994) document says seems to me very enlightened and enlightening: formation is a process of progressive assumption of the sentiments of Christ. There is a great innovation, in fact, in this expression: the classic tradition-
only one who knows the Son well, that is, God the Father! He alone can carry out this action in us. Here we have the idea of Lifelong Learning (LL), as the pedagogical-creative action of the Father who molds in us the heart of his Son by the power of the Holy Spirit, in every moment of our life...

1.3 - Docibilitas

If anything, what is important and decisive, on our part, is the interior attitude of attention and availability to this action, or more than docilitas, the docibilitas, which indicates this vigilance of the heart and the mind to catch every little impulse. In simple words, docibilitas is the freedom of the believer who has learned to let himself be formed by life for life, or who has learned to learn from all the circumstances of life, from every situation, from every relationship, with any person, saint or sinner, in every age and existential season, in failure and in success, when everything goes well, when someone accuses and attacks, even slanders, in health and illness, in youth and in old age ..., because he knows that behind every circumstance or person or event of life is the hand of the Father who ... is dying of the desire to see in us the face of his Son.

It is with this docibilitas that we must awaken in every person in formation. Let’s say that never has a seminary formed a priest or a novitiate formed a consecrated person, because it is life that forms (as a mediation of the formative action of the Father). Nevertheless, seminary and novitiate have a very important function: to form to docibilitas.

*Seminary and novitiate have a very important function: to form to docibilitas.*

2 - THE TWO SOULS OF ONGOING FORMATION/ LIFELONG LEARNING

From what we have said, LL seems to possess two souls, or two dimensions, both important, but one of which is particularly revealing of its nature and function. LL is extraordinary, if it is interpreted as particular interventions, as refresher courses, of study and reflection on topics of particular importance, three-days, weeks of meetings, pilgrimages, monthly retreats, spiritual exercises, semesters or sabbatical years ..., and anything else that can periodically serve to sustain and animate the spiritual, intellectual, pastoral, charismatic life of the people in question.

This is why we maintain that the real Ongoing Formation/Lifelong Learning (LL) is the ordinary one, the one that takes place every day and, in every moment, exactly as it is in its nature (theological nature). If the Father at all times realizes this project then LL is an ordinary reality, is realized in ordinary situations and every day, passes through the mediations of normal life, from the brothers in community to the people I serve in the ministry. It does not need exceptional contexts but takes place where one lives one’s everyday life.

2.2 - Relationship between the two types

Both types of training are important and necessary, even if it is the ordinary LL that expresses the essence of the concept. Usually those who have entered the logic of the ordinary LL, and have a mentality and sensitivity formed in this sense, have no difficulty in taking part in the initiatives of the extraordinary FP. On the contrary, he sees them not only as an important and complementary completion, but as an indispensable dimension that best underlines the quality of the bond that binds him to his own institution and community of belonging. He will participate in it, recognizing its importance and giving the full contribution of his conviction and creativity...

In other words, the transition from extraordinary to ordinary LL is not automatic at all. And this is important to remember because today, in fact, LL that you continue to preach and give is almost exclusively that-- extraordinary, made up of courses and conferences, times of updates and recycling...

At the same time the ordinary LL must also remain open to the other way of understanding LL, which, precisely because it proposes initiatives that involve the group, prevents the individuals from thinking about their own training as a purely private matter and managed according to completely subjective criteria. Lifelong Learning, in fact, is both self-formation and training received from others and thanks to interpersonal relationship.
3 - Itineraries and proposals

Now let’s move on to the most practical part, to see what can be done on the extraordinary and then ordinary FP, but always starting from the idea that what is most important is not the identification of pedagogical modalities, but the creation in the person of an intelligent willingness to let oneself be formed by life for a lifetime, or docibilitas.

3.1 - Extraordinary Lifelong Learning

Recall that the extraordinary LL is the responsibility of the institution: it is responsible for organizing extraordinary LL programs, perhaps through an ad hoc commission, as we will say below, and in any case with the involvement of the institution in the person of its superiors...

Initiatives

There are certainly many ways and proposals at the local and general level, of considerable value, to which we have made quick reference before and that we all know well...

In this regard, the need to go beyond the purely didactic module, at the classical expert’s conference, and increasingly to foster the experience narrated by everyone, where one enriches the other and is enriched in turn, where the wealth of one becomes everyone’s wealth.

A structure?

Also in this line, says a text prepared by the CEI (Italian Episcopal Conference) for the LL of priests, but that applies also to the life of the consecrated, “we feel the need to be able to make available - at the diocesan or interdiocesan level - a stable and light structure: a place, which visibly expresses the care that a Church dedicates to its priests. Even more we reaffirm the commitment to dedicate a person or, better, a team, which can be trusted by priests and has a positive attitude not only to teaching, but also to relationships and is available to the apostolate of listening…”

3.2 - For Ordinary Lifelong Learning

What we have seen so far refers essentially to resources and experiences concerning some particular moments of our life. But if we really want to enter into the full logic of real LL, we cannot be content with some moments and spaces, but we must identify the formative value of every day of our life, indeed of every moment of it. Otherwise nothing has changed, and even all this talk about LL will have no real effect. And we also specify that, as the extraordinary LL is the responsibility of the institution, so the ordinary FP is the responsibility of the individual, who cannot delegate his personal growth to the institution. It's up to him to take charge of it.

The ways of daily life

The paths of LL are actually already set in good part by everyday life for those who have a watchful eye and an attentive heart (life speaks if there is a heart that listens). Suffice it to consider a certain structure of the day handed down to us by a wisdom that was formed over time and which formed innumerable friends and saints of God. Think of the meaning of the lectio matutina, which opens every day with the Word of the day (it is the good morning of God), Word as light and food, as the ever new theophany in which God, the Living One, today reveals himself to me (for this is lectio divina), the inspired Word (it is the breath of God, who somehow breathes in it), the Word that embraces the whole day, as a mission or salvation that must be accomplished on that precise
day, giving it rhythm and unity (*lectio continua*), the
Word that opens and closes the day (*lectio vespertina
o nocturna*), in the peace of those who saw salvation…

b) The community as a place and formative subject

The concept of LL gives great importance to the role of the community, recognizing in it the normal place of the formative journey, where each member is touched by the grace of the Father who forms us through privileged mediation, that of brothers not chosen by me and who have not chosen me, and who live with me. Each of them is the way along which the Father comes to me and I come to the Father. We note well: each of my brothers (who become brothers only when I recognize this mediating function in them), not just some of them (or the best and saints). This implies, on the part of the individual, an assumption of responsibility towards each of them and creates a strong bond: everyone is responsible for the path of holiness of the other.

In practice, the community in which the so-called instruments of integration of the good are put into practice: spiritual sharing, reflection on the Word, community discernment, community project, ministry of fraternal promotion (in its various forms). But also instruments of integration of evil: forgiveness, reconciliation, fraternal correction, revision of life...

A community superior should above all be the one who makes these instruments work, animates the community so that everyone lives to the end and as-

sumes his own responsibility towards the other and lets himself be formed.

c) Docilitas as sensitivity, sensitivity as discernment

We have already spoken of *docilitas*, and we mentioned at the beginning the meaning of Christian formation as a process of progressive assimilation of the sentiments, or of the sensibility of Christ. The Son who in all things seeks the will of the Father and whose greatest joy is in accomplishing this will. It seems to me that the element that connects the two realities is a very current concept, which often returns in the catechesis of Pope Francis, and at the center of the journey of preparation for the Synod now going on: discernment.

It could be the key word or the most eloquent symbol of the “docile” believer, and that has matured the sensibility of who in every case and in everything searches for God and his presence to let himself be educated.

And perhaps this is the most important point to underline. Discernment comes from afar, implies a meticulous training path that is attentive to one’s own interior world (made of senses, emotions, feelings, affections, tastes, criteria of choice and judgment…); it only makes sense if it becomes more and more the habitual way of living and believing, or the normal way of believing and growing in the faith of the normal believer. Discernment is unlikely if improvised, it cannot be what one does only in critical situations; it would be like reducing LL only to extraordinary interventions. And it is always necessary to discern why in every moment of life God has something to say to me and to give to me, to ask and to reproach me, in an often unprecedented and unexpected way...

**Discernment as a personal and community itinerary of ordinary Lifelong Learning!**

I believe this is the real challenge and also the grace. Grace because the constant action of the Father who wants to form in everyone the heart of his Son is a sure gift; challenge because this is the true commitment of man and believer: to seize this action at any moment to decide to answer in freedom and responsibility. It is precisely this kind of commitment that the pastoral action of the Church must aim, so that it may be more and more what it is called to be, the body of Christ!
As we end our 47th General Chapter with its theme: “Renewing of our Mission: Gratitude, Prophesy, Hope”, we greet the lay people who are part of our Passionist family and mission. You share our spirituality as sons and daughters of St. Paul of the Cross and we approach the future with you.

During our Chapter we looked at our mission with you – a mission “with” you. As a religious community we are incomplete without you.

“What's your experience working with the laity?” That question yielded a rich response from groups of Chapter members from all parts of the world. The experience takes many different forms, for you bring gifts different than ours and a holiness that often challenges ours. We welcome the graces you bring.

For that reason, we sought a mechanism at this Chapter to gather your wisdom and find ways to work together with you.

During our Chapter, Father Amedeo Cencini offered a welcomed presentation on life-long formation. He called “docibilitas”, the willingness to be taught, the key to grow daily in life.

Life in all its shapes and forms is how our loving God invites us to learn, day by day.

We see the need for docility in us all in the days ahead, as our community, our church and the world itself face an uncharted future. The present sexual abuse crisis, for one example, calls for docility. Church leaders and ministers, along with lay people, need to search humbly together for the wisdom and knowledge that bring healing and peace.

In the Consistory Hall in the Vatican where our Chapter members received the blessing of Pope Francis on October 22, there is a large painting of Jesus inviting his disciples, Peter, James and John and the others, to follow him to Jerusalem. Mark's Gospel, read during Sundays of October, says the disciples did not understand fully what the invitation to take up their cross meant. Neither do we fully understand it, but as Passionists we commit ourselves, under the patronage of St. Paul of the Cross, to know and live the mystery of the Passion of Jesus.

Let us embrace this mystery together as we prepare to celebrate 300 years of our history as a Passionist family. As our Chapter ends let us pray for one another, asking the Holy Spirit to make us docile learners.

Come, Holy Spirit, bring healing and life to our Passionist family, our church and our world. Amen.
Dear young people of the world,

We Passionists congregated in Rome for our General Chapter from 6 October to 27 October 2018. During the same time period, an international meeting of bishops (Synod) took place at the Vatican. The topic that they studied was, “Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment.” You were present in our prayers during these days because we want to share our mission and charism with you. The values which you embrace and express challenge us to renew our Passionist vocation. Like you, we also need to overcome prejudices. We need to begin our conversion if we want to move forward together with you.

From the Cross, Jesus Crucified gazes upon all people because He knows the sufferings of every person, especially those who are excluded, exploited, manipulated, or those who are abused in various ways. For this reason, Jesus Crucified calls us to reach out to you, wherever you are, and to offer you our loving service, just as the Church has ministered to humanity from its very beginning. If we hear and talk about your apathy, if we perceive some of you as unbelievers, if we classify you as being “alienated from the Church”, in part we must blame ourselves because we have failed to be attentive to you. We believe that a way to renew our mission is to learn how to care for you.

We, the Passionists, are in the process of examining and renewing our Mission and we know that this process includes risks. Nevertheless, we want to take risks with you and for you. We know that in this process we can learn much from you. We want to connect with you and share with you the joy of the Gospel, especially through digital media by creating a social network with evangelical values. We thank God for your presence and openness to dialogue. We hope that you will join us in this new means of evangelization.

All of us share a common vocation to holiness that we received through our baptism. Our mission calls us to proclaim the Gospel of the Passion to the world with our life and our apostolate, according to the spiritual teachings of St. Paul of the Cross. You can help us fulfill this mission, because you have your own means of expressing your faith and of taking risks in order to commit yourselves to sharing the Gospel and transforming the various realities that continue to crucify humanity. The spirituality of the Passion provides you with multiple opportunities to volunteer and fulfill your vocation by being in solidarity with and reaching out to those who are on the peripheries of our world. This is the missionary vocation by which the Church calls us to live in a prophetic way.

We Passionists want to live, share, and witness the charism of the Passion with you by offering responses of hope to those who are seeking meaningful ways to live their life. Together we want to increase and revitalize your sense of happiness, hope, confidence and commitment, and to offer you a clearer vision for the future. Thus, remembering the words of Pope Francis to young people in Cracow, Poland, during the World Youth Day 2016, we Passionists want to say that the world has no need for “young retirees, nor young people of the sofa”. Young people and the Passionists need to journey together. Young people and the Passionists need to walk the city streets. Side by side, young people and the Passionists need to travel the roads of the world toward the future.

With you, we Passionists want to renew our Mission. In a spirit of gratitude to God, we know that we are family; with a spirit of prophecy, we will face the challenges ahead; and in a spirit of hope, we embrace the Cross of Christ.
On 7 November 2018 Pope Francis authorized the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to promulgate the decree on the heroic virtues of the Servant of God, Sr. Maria Luciani (1920 – 1954), Passionist nun of the Monastery of Ripatransone (Italy).

Summary of the Decree concerning her virtuous life

The Servant of God was born on 2 May 1920 in Montegranaro, in the Marche region of Italy. Two days after her birth she received the sacrament of Baptism. On 28 March 1927 she was confirmed and on May 6 of the same year she received her First Holy Communion.

At the age of thirteen she expressed, for the first time, the desire of consecrating herself to God in a cloistered monastery. At the age of twenty the vocation to the monastic life grew stronger and clearer and so, on June 4, 1945, after bidding farewell to her relatives, and accompanied by her mother she departed for the monastery of the Passionist cloistered nuns in the Italian city of Ripatransone.

After almost a year of novitiate and having overcome various obstacles of poor health, on November 5, 1947, the Servant of God professed First Vows. However, her health progressively worsened due to tuberculosis, making the administration of any therapy useless. However, despite intense physical and spiritual struggles, she demonstrated extraordinary strength and an uncommon serenity.

The characteristic spirituality of Sr. Maria Addolorata was characterized by the offering of her life in order to be conformed to Jesus Crucified. This was demonstrated in her total and unconditional acceptance of her physical sufferings, of which she willingly spoke and wrote, so that everyone would know about her great love for Jesus.

Tireless in her constant ascent to perfection, the Servant of God knew well that the road that she was called to travel to its end was replete with difficulties; however, she firmly proposed not to show weakness or to have second thoughts. It was enough to remain faithful to following Jesus with all the humility of which she was capable. It may well be said that faith and hope were her faithful travel companions, while the intimate union with God was the lighthouse that illuminated her path.

By 22 July 1954, her clinical condition was irreversible. The Servant of God was consumed by the illness and on 23 July 1954 she died at the hospital in the city of Teramo.

By virtue of her fame for holiness, the diocesan inquiry was conducted from 23 July 1995 to 1 November 1997 at the Episcopal Curia of San Benedetto del Tronto-Ripatransone-Montalto. When the Positio was prepared, it was discussed, according to the usual procedure, to determine if the servant of God exercised the heroic virtues. With a positive outcome, the Particular Congress of theological consultants was held on May 16, 2017. Subsequently the cardinals and bishops, at their ordinary session of 31 October 2018, acknowledged that the Servant of God exercised to a heroic degree, the theological and cardinal virtues and the annexed virtues.

Therefore, an accurate report of all these phases was presented to the Holy Father, Pope Francis by the Cardinal Prefect, His Eminence Angelo Becciu. The Holy Father, ratifying the vote of the Congregation of the Causes of Saints, said:

"The theological virtues of faith, hope and charity towards God and neighbor, as well as of the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance and of the annexed virtues, in an heroic degree are attributed to the Servant of God, Addolorata del Sacro Costato (in the world: Maria Luciani), a professed religious of the Congregation of the Nuns of the Passion of Jesus Christ, for the case and the effect which it concerns."
On October 18, 2018, the Superior General officially initiated the period of preparation for the Jubilee. And perhaps it would not be a bad idea to keep in mind every day that the Jubilee is such a serious and important event that it should not be something makeshift; rather it is an event that must be attentively prepared in all its dimensions.

The film about the Founder, entitled "Paul of the Cross" (English language) by the director Elisabetta Valgiusti was favorably received by the English-speaking viewers during the General Chapter on October 19, 2018 in the Basilica of Sts. John and Paul. The basilica was chosen as the viewing space because it is the largest area available on site and can offer space for over 200 seats. In fact, all the capitulars were present as well as many guests, including the actors who interpreted some parts of the film.

The film is basically a documentary that presents those places associated with St. Paul of the Cross. It also contains comments and interviews with experts; whereas only some parts (slightly less than half) are interpreted by actors. The Italian version will be ready by Easter, 2019.

The Jubilee Preparatory Commission met on 7-8 February 2019. It welcomed a new member, Fr. John Pearce (SPIR), and thanked Fr. Gary Perritt (SPIR) (who had to resign for personal reasons) for his contributions to the Commission. The Commission prepared their second Bulletin, Jubilaeum.cp which will offer reflections on the topic of “gratitude”. In subsequent issues reflections will be offered on the topics of prophecy and then hope.

The Jubilee Preparatory Icon has begun its pilgrimage. It went first to Mt. Argentario to "absorb" the spirit of the Founder in the first monastery of the Congregation. It arrived on the Feast of Mary Presented at the Temple (November 21) which was also the day of the Vestition of five novices of the MAPRAES Province. There could have been no more meaningful beginning to this pilgrimage! Then the Icon was transported via airplane to Holland. The complete itinerary of the Icon, at least for the first year, is presented below. Several requests were made to the Commission to prepare a second icon so that it could remain longer in a Configuration. However, the icon of the Passionist Jubilee is unique and therefore, there can be only one!

**The Itinerary of the Pilgrim Icon**

- From July to December 2019: Configuration/Province of the SACRED HEART (SCOR), Latin America (1) and Spain.
- From July – 20 August 2019: Bishop Romero Zone of SCOR (Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Cuba).
- From 20 August – September 2019: Mother of Holy Hope Zone of SCOR (Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador);
- From October – 5 November 2019: Andes Zone of SCOR (Peru, Bolivia, Chile);
- From 5 November – December 2019: Spain (SCOR);
- From January to June 2020: CHRIST CRUCIFIED Configuration (CJC) -- Latin America (2) and the United States, Jamaica, Haiti, Canada, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay.
- From July to December 2020: MARY PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE (MAPRAES) Configuration/Province -- Italy, Portugal, France and Bulgaria
- From July to December 2021: ASIA-PACIFIC Configuration (PASPAC): Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Korea, China, Indonesia, Japan, India, Vietnam.
The fifth Congress of the MAIAP Vice Province of Japan took place from 10 to 14 December 2018. Present were Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General, Fr. Gwen Barde (General Consultor), Fr. Thomas McDonough (President of the PASPAC Configuration) and ten finally professed members of the Vice Province.

The MAIAP Vice Province is composed of a small number of religious and, recently has been facing the challenges of diminishment and aging. They have honestly and courageously studied which ministries and retreats they must relinquish, as well as those that should be maintained for the present and for the future. In his opening address, Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General, urged the religious to work together to discern God’s future for the Vice Province.

“I am very much aware, as you are, that the Vice Province is in a different, and more difficult, place than at the last Congress 4 years ago. At that time, you were strongly feeling the strain of real diminishment and struggling to find ways to strengthen your commitments of the Vice Province’s apostolates. Four years on the situation has become even more critical – not due to any fault of the religious, but due to circumstances beyond your control…”

Among the challenges that were discussed was the declining Catholic population in Japan, and consequently, the future of the two retreat houses at Mefu and Fukuoka. The discussion broadened into how such local decisions fit into the overall pastoral planning for the Vice-Province, and how such planning now is done in the context of the PASPAC configuration.

The Superior General spoke about the painful closing of the Tokyo Retreat and the opening of the new St. Paul of the Cross residence. The Vice-Prov-ince chose to care for their aged and infirm religious within community. Therefore, they decided to close the community in Tokyo and to build a new senior friendly residence, the St. Paul of the Cross retreat.

Finally, Fr. Joachim thanked Fr. Michael Ogwen-no (General Consultor) for conducting the canonical visitation ahead of the Congress and for his report in which he highlighted the following challenges of the Vice Province that need attention: “the future status of the Vice Province, especially in personnel, leadership, formation and apostolate; the future and viability of the

Retreat House in Fukuoka and the St. Francis Xavier church on the property; initial formation: formators and the formation of new members within community; and individualism.” Despite their limited personnel resources, Fr. Joachim praised the Vice-Province’s generosity in offering one of their most active religious, Fr. Paul Hata to the new foundation in Myanmar.

An afternoon was devoted to a dialogue with the Passionist Partners in Japan. These include the Passionist Nuns, the retreat houses and their support groups, the parish ministries and the kindergarten ministry. It was a fruitful dialogue especially as the lay people and the religious Sister spoke of what attracted them to the Passionists, frequently the result of communication with a Passionist priest or Brother.

At the conclusion of the Congress the following religious were elected to positions of leadership in the Vice Province: Fr. Francis Yamauchi (Vice Provincial), Fr. Francis Nakamura and Fr. Joseph Someno (First Consultor).

[We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Fr. Thomas McDonough (SPIR) for this article.]
During the week of 14-19 January 2019, the REPAC Province held its 4th Provincial Chapter in the city of Sanggau, in the Province of West Kalimantan, Indonesia. The Chapter was held at the La Verna conference Centre of the Capuchin Franciscans. In attendance at the Chapter, which was a chapter of delegates, were 27 capitulars including Fr. Nikodemus Jimbun (Provincial Superior). Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General, presided, with Fr. Gwen Barde (General Consultant liaison for PASPAC). Also, present was Fr. Thomas McDonough, President of the PASPAC Configuration that comprises this province.

In his opening address to the Chapter, the Superior General thanked the former General Consultants, Fr. Sabinus Lohin and Fr. Michael Ogweno for having conducted the Province canonical visitation in preparation for this Chapter. He continued noting that despite the many challenges that the Province has had to overcome in order to arrive at this Chapter, “you can take pride in what you have achieved and look to the future with responsibility and hope. The Province continues to grow significantly with new vocations to our life.”

Additionally, Fr. Joachim noted some challenges that the Province needs to address in order to ensure its future spiritual and apostolic growth. “Because of the vast geographical situation of the Province, some of the religious lament that the Provincial is not always able to visit all the members of the Province in their respective communities and in the places where they work, thus not being fully aware of their particular challenges and difficulties.” Additionally, because of the geographic distances, there are few provincial gatherings which “contributes to a lack of knowledge and awareness of one another in the Province.” Furthermore, he noted that some religious live and work alone (or with one other religious) in isolated parishes as parish priests having very little contact with other Passionists or communities of the Province. He continued to address the topic of communication and interpersonal relationships saying, “little communication and dialogue in community life leads the members to live in an independent way… which promotes individualism.”

In the area of formation there is a need for comprehensive and effective training for those responsible for formation. Furthermore he noted that “the ongoing formation of the religious of the Province is a big challenge… and a program needs to be studied and prepared. This need also emerged as a priority from the recent General Chapter.”

Finally, he spoke about our Passionist charism. He noted that despite the multi-ethnic differences of the Province, which is a source of richness, this reality can also be a threat to our fraternal spirit. He also encouraged the Province to develop “more apostolates which are in line with our specific mission in the Church and which promotes our charism: to keep alive the memory of the Passion of Jesus. This must be supported by and nurtured in our communities and… in partnership with the lay members of the Passionist Family.”

Other matters that were discussed were health care for the religious, the development of a number of mission options on the island of Flores, financial concerns, the openness of the Province to greater involvement in the new Myanmar mission, the development of new parishes, spirituality centres, theological institutes and an HIV/Aids outreach.

During the Chapter the following religious were elected Provincial and Consultors: Fr. Nikodemus Jimbun (Provincial), Fr. Ligorius Jalak (First Consultant), Fr. Paulus Jasmin, Fr. Agustinus Kraeng Ritan and Fr. Basilius Iswadi.

[We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Fr. Thomas McDonough (SPIR) for this article.]
The MACOR Provincial Chapter was held from December 3 to 8, 2018 at the Passionist Monastery and Retreat House in Gwangju Province, South Korea. Present at the Chapter were Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General, Fr. Thomas McDonough (President of the PASPAC Configuration) and Fr. Martin Coffey (Executive Secretary for Formation). Attending the Chapter were twenty-nine finally professed members of the MACOR Province of Korea and China. A new Provincial Superior and two Consultors were elected: Fr. Joseph Oh (Oh Sung Kyun) Provincial Superior, Fr. Peter Seo (Huron Sung) First Consultor, and Fr. Peter Oh (Oh Jae Seong) Second Consultor.

The Chapter’s concerns included issues related to community life, diversifying ministry and apostolates, the maintenance and future of the retreat houses, proper care for aging religious, the wider promotion of the Charism in publications and communications, the mission in China and traditional Korean music and choirs. In his opening address, Fr. Joachim spoke about the difficulties that may exist in intercultural communities and relationships. “Multi-ethnic, intercultural and international communities are a reality in the globalized world of today and a growing phenomenon in our Congregation. [The issue] cannot and must not be avoided because of…its challenges. Rather, by the very fact of our religious consecration to the Passion of Jesus, we must accept this reality and find the riches which come from listening, understanding, dialogue, tolerance and forgiveness. Unity and community are what we must strive to build and attain. We give witness to unity by respectful acceptance of diversity… In this sense our community life is our first apostolate, as the recent General Chapter highlighted, and the principal element of our religious life in fostering the renewal of our mission: ‘...our communities become a leaven of salvation in the Church and in the world.’ (Const. 6)”

Another important topic that was studied was the Province’s mission in China. Fr. Joachim talked about this in his opening address— “One gets the impression that the original clear vision which the Province had for the establishment of the mission in China and the readiness to assume responsibility for its development seems to have waned. MACOR had contributed greatly to the foundation and nurturing of the China Mission over the years in difficult circumstances and must not now relinquish its responsibility. Rather, while acknowledging these difficulties, it is ever more critical to open a dialogue and collaborate with the structures of solidarity established by the Configuration to resolve these issues… Despite the difficulties which exist in China concerning religion, our mission there is growing. God is blessing the Congregation with a good number of young men who want to be Passionists… Let us be generous in giving ourselves to the work of evangelisation in this great land after the example and in memory of those first Passionist missionaries.”

A significant part of the Chapter was also dedicated to meeting with the lay Passionist Partners of the Province. The president of the Passionist Partners addressed the Chapter in a special session. On the final day of the Chapter many Passionist Partners spent the morning session in dialogue with the Superior General.

At the concluding Mass of the Chapter, the Korean Province acknowledged the Golden Jubilee of Profession of Bro. Laurence Finn, who has been a member of the Korean Province for over forty years. Currently he is the novice master for the international novitiate in Adelaide, Australia.

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Fr. Thomas McDonough (SPIR) to this article.
In 2005, Father Ottaviano D'Egidio, then Superior General, sent three Passionists from Rome to Vietnam. They were very cautious and unsure as they set out to plant the charism of St Paul of the Cross, the living memory of the Passion, in hostile Communist soil.

Very soon they encountered young men who listened eagerly to the words of the cross, and a community began to form. Despite official atheism, the soil was not so hostile, in fact it had been prepared by a long history of heroic faith with more martyrs than anyone can count. Vietnam is no stranger to the Cross.

While the community of the Mission of Our Lady of Lavang of the SPIR Province, has been growing over the years, housing has been a constant challenge. Students have endured overcrowding and inadequate facilities. In 2009 we completed a modest house, St Gabriel’s, but we still needed to rent elsewhere. The community became split between four locations.

In 2012 we bought a small piece of land near St Gabriel’s, and the project for the new St Paul’s began. It took a tough six years to bring the house to its present state of near completion, - the large rooftop chapel is still to be built. There was the endless grind of fundraising, organized and carried out by Fr Jefferies Foale (SPIR), Mission Superior, with help from Fr Thomas Anamattathil (THOM) and various generous mission appeal preachers from Australia. There were interminable negotiations with officials and builders, with many a setback, patiently, persistently and diligently carried out by Fr Thomas, as bit by bit, the project moved forward. He assured at every step that the work was solid and well done, nothing shoddy, nothing flashy or luxurious, fit to endure. He encountered the worst and the best, dishonesty, and abundant generosity. Of course, everyone has helped willingly. In particular, in the latter stages, Fr Joseph Dien (SPIR) has been more and more to the fore working hard, with his keen business sense and knowledge of how things are done in his native Vietnam.

In St Paul’s the Mission has a splendid home for up to 32 religious, 23 are in residence today, with guest rooms available. It has ample spaces and facilities for many activities. All it lacks is the large rooftop chapel. In God’s good time that will follow.

So, there was much to celebrate on 26 January 2019, the day when about 600 of our friends gathered to enjoy this milestone in the presence of two bishops and around 40 priests. Fr Joachim Rego, Superior General, spoke movingly of making a building, a house, into a true home, a true home for human and religious development. Afterwards he said it is the best house in the Congregation, something we would never dare even imagine. We do think of it as the base from which the Congregation will reach out to the poor of Vietnam, near and far, as a house of prayer.

All of us here are happy that the house was in fact already blessed before the important people even arrived, when we welcomed a crowd of the poor, the blind and the crippled from around the neighbourhood for a great party and gift giving. They blessed us, as the poor always will. Buckets of holy water will never outdo their blessing.
Following are excerpts from a homily that Fr. Jefferies Foale, OP, preached on the Feast of St. Paul of the Cross in 2013.

I have heard that St Paul of the Cross once remarked that a certain tree-lined avenue looked just like Aleppo. Only later people asked, “Did he ever visit Syria?” He could have. In his youth he could have taken a ship from Venice. But what if he had sailed around the world, to Vietnam? He would have found there, in 1714 or so, a congregation of sisters, called the Lovers of the Holy Cross, founded in 1676 by the saintly Bishop Pierre Lambert de la Motte. The Bishop taught each sister to direct her mind, heart, and life towards Jesus Christ crucified, “the one and only object of her devotion”. If Paul ever got to Vietnam, he must surely have thought to himself, “If they have been living such a life for over 40 years already, even to the point of martyrdom, that during persecution, when the priests and all the deacons and the catechists were killed or scattered it was the sisters who held the faithful together.”

I can imagine he might have said to himself, “Well, if they can do this in Vietnam, why not try it in Italy?”

Today Paul would recognize at a glance that Vietnam has the Cross at its heart. He would feel at home. He would recognize with love the face of his suffering God among the countless poor and marginalized. He would be quick to reach out, having no trouble finding “poor incommodious places” where the struggle to survive is brutal, and people suffer from ignorance, exploitation and persecution. A man who could boldly cross enemy lines to minister to souls at Orbetello and Monte Argentario would be fearless in the face of the things that make us timid and hesitant. We feel him urging us on to greater things, “Courage, my sons!”

Paul could not fail to respond to the deep faith of the people, and to the ready self-sacrifice of the young giving their lives to God. He would look with those deep eyes of his at the young who aspire to our life, and their love for the crucified would fill him with joy.

Paul yearned for the people of England and other lands. He had a missionary heart. He was open to the new. In Vietnam today he would appreciate the challenge for missionaries of the Cross struggling with a complex cultural situation. Like the Jesuit missionary, Alexandre de Rhodes, he would appreciate the reverence in the old tribal traditions for life, in the trees, the rivers and the family. He would like the strong Confucian tradition for its upholding order and respect, stressing hard work and study. Even the Taoists quest for the harmony inherent in the universe might appeal to him. He would love the Buddhist value for meditation and freedom from desire. Vietnamese hospitality would win his heart, and he would know a nation that is open to the Gospel. He might be taken aback by today’s disintegration of tradition, due to colonialism, communism, modernization and growing prosperity. Young Vietnamese Passionists might puzzle him a little with their motorbikes, cell phones and computers…

The congregation is taking root now, and the process is going ahead steadily under difficulties, but the courage and dedication of many people, our candidates and their families, is rapidly approaching a critical mass, becoming a Vietnamese reality, not just a foreign project. The resemblance between the charism of the Lovers of the Holy Cross and our own should not be such a surprise when one understands that their founder, the saintly Bishop Pierre Lambert de la Motte and St Paul of the Cross both grew up spiritually nourished by the works of St Francis de Sales, particularly, “Introduction to the Devout Life”. There, references to devotion to the cross abound, e.g. “If, nevertheless, the temptation persists or increases, hasten in spirit to embrace the holy Cross, as though you beheld Jesus Christ Crucified actually present.” (Introduction to the Devout Life: Part IV, Chapter 7)

We have a challenge now to seize the moment. The challenge is now… In this region of the Congregation the heritage of St Paul of the Cross is expressing itself in a way that is alive and new. And we must have self-confidence and understand that we have something very precious that we can hand on to others and share with the rest of the world. You know, the Congregation is missionary. It doesn’t end when it arrives here. It reaches out to the rest of the world. [St. Paul of the Cross’] question for the Passionist venture in Vietnam could be, “What took you so long?”
The house where the Passionist, Saint Charles Houben of Mount Argus (1821-1893) was born is located in the village of Munstergeleen (Limburg, the Netherlands). Almost a century ago it was converted into a chapel. In 1954, the stable and barn were added to the complex. Since Charles’ canonization in 2007 we are welcoming many more pilgrims. In the Netherlands few people go to church, but the “Pater Karwel Kapel” attracts more than 1,500 people a week! It is an oasis in the “jungle” of everyday life. Some are international pilgrim groups, but mostly they are individuals from the local area who come to light a candle, pray and visit the gardens, religious article shop and the museum. Most importantly, they come to tell their stories of suffering and to seek healing, especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation— in the spirit of St. Charles.

In the course of time “Fr Charles’ Chapel” has become the main focus of the Passionist presence and ministry in Holy Hope Province (SPE). Four Passionists minister here—three as part of a pastoral team and one as president of the board. Many volunteers work with us in the governance, commissions and task forces (for projects), as well as overseeing the practical aspects of opening, closing and cleaning of the chapel and taking care of the garden and the building maintenance.

Among his various ministries, Fr. Charles welcomed many people in need in the confessional. He was attentive to them. Nowadays we Passionists continue this ministry of hospitality. The Chapel is a place where people feel welcome and safe. In keeping with Fr. Charles’ pastoral approach we try to be attentive to each person who comes to the Shrine. We are conscious that in the society around us people often are not regarded as individuals, but as objects to be used and then discarded. Thus, we have made “attentiveness” the guideline for everything we do in and around the shrine.

One day we received a remarkable financial legacy from a benefactor. We could have used the money for general maintenance of the site; however, we decided to use it for a special project that would further enable us to be attentive to the pilgrims. We already had a Stations of the Cross. Now we wanted to be more attentive to the suffering and forgotten people in society and in the Church.

From our pastoral experiences of past years, we drew up a list of the spiritual needs of those who came to the Shrine. Each year we decided to choose an outdoor work of art by local artists that would help people to connect with their suffering and the suffering of others. They are placed in the garden around the Lourdes grotto, seven in total— a reference to the seven sorrows of Mary. Some of these “crucified” of today who frequent the Shrine include unemployed local miners, victims of domestic violence and refugees. For the year 2019 the theme is broken families. Another part of the garden is designated for two statues referring to death. We already have one for the relatives of people who took their own life.

Hence visitors to the shrine “meet” their “crucified” neighbours through the sculptures. It is a reminder of their presence in our midst and their suffering, the “memoria passionis”. The addition of a work of art each year challenges us to reorient our prayer life, as well as to organize special exhibitions in our museum and to contact local politicians and the media in order to draw attention to the theme. Additionally, we organize lectures and concerts—always with a focus on the theme that inspired the art work. Recently the sculpture garden has begun to attract school groups who use the site for their scholastic projects. It is our hope that this effort will inspire similar projects among the worldwide Passionist Family to be creative in their efforts to live and proclaim the Passionist charism.
From January 20 to February 4, 2019, Passionist Nuns, representing 28 monasteries present in 13 countries, gathered at the Generalate of Sts. John and Paul in Rome to celebrate the first General Chapter of their newly formed Congregation.

At the conclusion of the General Assembly of the superiors of the Passionist monasteries (October 4, 2015), the final document of the Assembly expressed a unanimous desire to realize a "canonical structure" of communion for the monasteries, proposing-- if the competent authority approved it-- the erection of the "Congregation of the Nuns of the Passion of Jesus Christ".

A process of communion was initiated, guided by Sister Fernanda Barbiero, SMSD, whom the Holy See had appointed General Delegate for the Passionist monasteries. It was a process that relied on the collaboration of a sizeable group of Passionist religious. After presenting the hopes and desires of the monasteries to Church authorities, the latter offered a response to the nuns on 29 June 2018: "After prolonged and extensive consultation with the monasteries concerned, and in light of the request presented by the Reverend General Delegate dated January 25, 2018, bearing in mind what is established in the Apostolic Constitution Vultum Dei Querere concerning contemplative life, the Supreme Pontiff Francis, referring particularly to NN. 28-30, this dicastery with this Decree erects the CONGREGATION OF THE NUNS OF THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST composed of all the sui iuris monasteries that profess the Rule and Constitutions of the Founder, Saint Paul of the Cross."

Both the decree and the accompanying letter were signed by His Eminence Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, prefect of the Dicastery and by His Excellency José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM, Archbishop Secretary. Conscious that the Pope normally acts through the Roman Curia and in obedience to him as Supreme Superior, with gratitude and filial obedience almost all the monasteries embraced this decree, truly expressing that they are in the heart of the Church.

This sense of being "in the heart of the Church," a phrase that was used in the official logo of the Chapter, was evident by the presence of Msgr. Orazio Pepe, official of the Secretary of State (formerly chief of the Section for Contemplative Life of the dicastery for Consecrated Life-CIVCSVA), of Fr. Sebastiano Paciolla, O. Cist., an official of the Apostolic Signature (formerly under-Secretary of the CIVCSVA), of Fr. Leonello Leidi (CP-MAPRAES), an official of the CIVCSVA, of His Excellency José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM., Archbishop Secretary of the CIVCSVA and, especially, by the concern of Pope Francis, who welcomed the nuns at his General Audience and praised their meekness and obedience to the Church, encouraging them to be not only "Passionists", but "passionate". The Chapter was concluded with the Nuns’ renewal of their fidelity to the Pope and the Church during their participation in the Mass for the World Day for Consecrated Life (2 February 2019), at which the Holy Father presided, in St. Peter’s Basilica.

The General Chapter was composed of 61 participants from different continents, nations and cultures--43 Capitulars, 3 invited guests and 15 collaborators who assumed various tasks of the Chapter (president, secretariat, translations, accommodations, speakers, etc.). It was a wonderful experience of internationality and interculturalism; but above all, there was a sense of joy in sharing the beautiful charism that extends its roots in so many different parts of the world. In fact, the General Chapter demonstrates "the close fraternal
relationship that exists between the monasteries, and it is the mechanism that promotes fidelity to the Passionist heritage and encourages appropriate renewal”.

The work began by trying to analyze the reality of the nuns from three different perspectives: Passionist cloistered life itself illuminated by the Word and the action of the Holy Spirit (a retreat directed by Mother Monica della Volpe, Cistercian of the Strict Observance); the experience of the road traveled during these past three years (report of the General Delegate); and the concrete situation of each one of the monasteries (reports of the Superiors of the monasteries).

The decree of erection of the monastic Congregation. Fr. Floriano de Fabiis (MAPRAES), further explained the General Statutes by developing three key elements— the figure of the President, formation and the relationship between the monasteries. He also addressed the charismatic understanding of enclosure and the Habit. Finally, Fr. Antonio Munduate undertook the task of weaving together all these documents and highlighting references to them in the Constitutions, as well as the corresponding elements of canonical-normative nature.

Of the many images used by Pope Francis to refer to the contemplative life of women, the Chapter wanted to highlight those that refer to light— to be lighthouses, torches, rays, lamps... that “irradiate the Crucified Love”, which is the second part of the logo. The Passionist nuns cannot reduce their life to “being” or “existing” passively in the Church. They have a mission, a testimony to offer—from their contemplative life they participate in the same mission that their Passionist brothers have in the Church by sustaining the latter’s apostolate. That is why the nuns are grateful for the assistance they have been given in recent years and ask that they continue to be accompanied and helped, especially in vocation ministry and formation.

The male and female Passionists have the same Founder and the same charism that they live out in their apostolate. The nuns carry out their apostolate by contemplation which, in turn, sustains the active apostolate of their male counterparts.

In order to carry out this task, the Chapter suggested several elements which, at this historical moment, must be considered in community and Congregational projects. The Chapter proceeded to choose people who will be responsible for accompanying and guiding the Congregation so that the nuns and the monasteries may live in fidelity to the Passionist charism and promote the observance of the Constitutions. Subsequent to the election process, the composition of the government of the new Congregation is as follows—Mother Catherine Marie Schuhmann, of the Monastery of Lucca (Italy), President; Mother Gertrude Poggio, of the monastery of Croisy (France), First Counselor (Vicar); Sr. Ana María Cabañas, from the monastery of Querétaro (Mexico), Counselor; Sr. María Martina Naiman, from the monastery of Tarquinia, Counselor; and Sr. Luzia Daniela Almeida, from the São Paulo Monastery, Counselor.

This reality was then studied from within a specific legal framework. The process of the renewal of the contemplative Passionists coincided with the life of the Church and more specifically the reality of the contemplative life of women. The nuns’ Constitutions, adopted in 1979, were “outdated” almost as soon as they were approved. In 1983 the current Code of Canon Law was promulgated. In 2016 the Apostolic Constitution Vultum Dei Querere was published and in 2018 the corresponding instruction for its application, Cor Orans. Also, in 2018, when the monastic Congregation was erected, the Holy See approved the General Statutes by which it will be regulated.

It was obvious that there was a need to conform the Congregation to the new legal framework and to present the necessary adaptations to the Holy See. For this task, Bishop Carballo, OFM, explained Cor Orans, focusing on the elements relating to the Congregation and the points that need the most clarification— autonomy (which no document says will be eliminated), formation, and the authority of the President. Fr. Leonello Leidi (MAPRAES) explained...
PROFESSIONS AND ORDINATIONS

PROFESSION OF FIRST VOWS

During the period from 1 December 2018 to 1 March 2019, ten Religious professed First Vows.

**SCOR** Province of Spain and Latin America, 15 January 2019: Jaime Javier Velásquez Zambrano, Luis Alonso Santiago Chicas, Milcíades Enrique Tenorio Gaitán, Gilberto José Arias Rodríguez, Oscar Fernando Rivas Quintero, Oscar Armando Paz Rivera, Albims Omar Garrido Negrette, Carlos Andrés Becerra Cerón, José Adalí Miranda Hernández and Roger Saldaña Gonzales.

PROFESSION OF PERPETUAL VOWS

During the period from 1 December 2018 to 1 March 2019, five of our Religious professed Final Vows.

**VULN** Province of Germany and Austria, 2 December 2018: Pius Görres.

**SCOR** Province of Spain and Latin America, 23 December 2018: Roberto Mejía Altamirano; 23 February 2019: Oscar A. Vera Vite.

**GETH** Province of Brazil, Mozambique, Argentina and Uruguay, 13 January 2019: José Ronaldo Venâncio dos Santos; 17 February 2019: Antunes Mario Taibo.
DIACONATE ORDINATIONS

During the period from 1 December 2018 to 1 March 2019, five Religious were ordained deacons.

REG Province of Mexico and the Dominican Republic, 3 November 2018: Juan Manuel Rodríguez Mejía.

EXALT Province of Brazil, 2 December 2018: Sandoval Dias.

ASSUM Province of Poland, the Czech Republic and Ukraine, 8 December 2018: Grzegorz Mossakowski.

VULN Province of Germany and Austria, 8 December 2018: Dominikus Hartmann.

SPIR Province of Australia, New Zeland, Papua New Guinea and Vietman, 1 February 2019: Joseph Donald Liaia.

PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS

During the period from 1 December 2018 to 1 March 2019, six Religious were ordained to the priesthood.


GETH Province of Brazil, Mozambique, Argentina and Uruguay, 12 January 2019: Fr. Fernando da Silva Oliveira.

Roberto Mejía Altamirano
Dominikus Hartmann
Marino Longo
Giovanni Benenati
Muthappan Silvadhasan
Jerald Varghese
Fernando da Silva Oliveira
Ippolito Di Maggio
Joseph Liaia
NEW PUBLICATIONS


**PEREIRA JOSÉ CARLOS**, Encontros de formação para pais e padrinhos de Batismo, Paulus, São Paulo 2018, 2° edição.

## Notitiae Obitus
### 6 November 2018 - 23 Februarius 2019

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<tr>
<th>DIE</th>
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## Moniales et Sorores Defunctae

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<td>10/11/18</td>
<td>Sr. Lucia del S. Costato (Antonia Maddalena) Bisci</td>
<td>Monasterio Passionistarum de Genova - Quarto (Italia)</td>
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<td>Sr. Maria Fedele di Maria Bambina (Antonia) Dinoi</td>
<td>Inst. Sororum Passionistarum a S. Paulo a Cruce (Signa) - Prov. Sacro Cuore di Gesù</td>
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<td>Sr. Maria Angelica Lombardi</td>
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<td>Sr. Therese Marie of the Cross (Jannet) Pritchard</td>
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<td>Sr. Angelus Cleary</td>
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<td>Sr. M. Begoña di S. Gabriele dell'Addolorata Polo Castillo</td>
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Consecrated life is not about survival – it’s about new life.
It is a living encounter with the Lord in his people.
It is a call to faithful obedience in daily life and to the unexpected surprises from the Spirit.
It is a vision of what we need to embrace in order to experience joy – Jesus.

- Pope Francis
Homily, Mass for Religious
2 February 2019